

[Ambrosio Chavez]

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Words 1036

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I was born in 1866, in Valencia County, at Manzano, New Mexico. In 1879 my mother and father moved from Manzano to Lincoln, Lincoln County, New Mexico. I was thirteen years old then and I remember that we moved in two wagons drawn by oxen. We had no trouble with the Indians on the trip. Once when we camped for the night a dog came around the camp and was trying to get into things and I took my father's gun and shot the dog. I tho'ught I was a very big boy to shoot my father's gun. COPY

My father farmed at Lincoln and drove freight wagons from Lincoln and Fort Stanton to Las Vegas and return. He used oxen to haul with. It took over twenty days to make the round trip and if the weather was bad it took longer. The wagons came and went by way of White Oaks and Nogal. Once when my father was hauling freight we started from Lincoln going across the Patos Mountains and by way of White Oaks, on our way to Las Vegas. My father was riding horseback and I was driving one of the freight wagons drawn by oxen. A man named Stevens was going to Las Vegas for freight too and left Lincoln about the same time that we did. He was driving mules to his freight wagons wagon and traveled faster than we did. On account of the Indians the freight wagons camped together at night

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when they could. Mr. Stevens told my father that he would wait for us at a lake that was just across the Patos Mountains on the flats, and about eight or nine miles from White Oaks. We had planned to camp there the first night. Late in the afternoon my father rode on ahead of our wagons to the lake. When he got there he found that the Indians had killed 2 Stevens and robbed and burned his wagons and run off all his mules. Father hurried back to us and told us not to go to the lake and told us what had happened to Mr. Stevens. We had to make a dry camp that night and keep a sharp lookout for the Indians but none of them came around our camp. I remember how scared I was when we passed the lake the next day and saw the remains of the burned wagon and Mr. Stevens grave. In all of our freighting my father never had any trouble with the Indians. COPY

We were living in Lincoln when Billy the Kid was there but I did not know him very well. When he killed Ollinger and Bell and made his escape I was working on the Henry Farmer ranch near Lincoln. I can remember something that happened once when I was on a visit to my cousin, Martin Chavez in Picacho.

Billy the Kid knew Martin well and often stayed with him at his house. Some Texas people were traveling through the country in covered wagons and were camped near Picacho. They had a fast horse that they wanted to race against a mare that my cousin Martin had. The Texas people bet three fat beeves that their horse could out run Martin's mare. They had the race between the two horses and Martin's mare won the race so far ahead of the horse that the Texas people had that they got awful mad about it and would not pay the bet. Soon after the race was run Billy the Kid came by and stopped at Martins place. Martin told him about the race and that the Texas people would not pay their bet. Billy asked Martin if he wanted those beeves, and of course Martin said that he did. Billy said that he would collect the bet for him then. The women at Martin's ranch just begged Billy not to go to collect the bet as they were afraid that there would be trouble over it and that Billy might get killed, but Billy just laughed at them. He wore two guns and had on two belts of cartridges. He went out to the camp of the Texans and rode into the herd of cattle that they had with them and shot and killed three of their best beeves and told Martin to

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send after his beef. The Texans were so scared when they found out that he was Billy the Kid that they broke camp and left right away. COPY

I lived at Lincoln until 1905 and then I moved to Capiten and worked for the Titsworth Company for twenty-five years. I was married to Cecelia Serna about 1888. We never had any children of our own but we adopted and raised three children, all of whom live here in Carrizozo. My wife and I live here with our children and have for the past five years.

I have lived in Lincoln County for fifty-nine years.

Narrator: Ambrosio Chavez, Carrizozo, New Mexico, Aged 72 years.